



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:44 p.m. by Mayor Streeter.

Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

2011-0062 Proclamation Honoring Mack Kelly

Read

The proclamation was read by Councilor Monteiro.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Phil Butta, 282 Noank Ledyard Road, Mystic, stated that if SECT TV is selected to become the cable access television provider, it would rent space and purchase the needed equipment. He noted that the volunteers involved in SECT TV are engaged citizens, and he outlined the backgrounds of some of those volunteers.

Mr. Butta's five minutes had expired and Helen Rush, 72 Buddington Road, yielded the floor to allow Mr. Butta to finish.

Councilor O'Beirne raised a "Point of Order" stating that an individual either speaks during Citizens Petitions or not. Each person does not "own" five minutes of time to delegate to someone else. As Mr. Butta was almost done with his comments, Councilors agreed to allow him to finish his statement.

Mr. Butta continued on to say that the Town does many things well, but he feels that it is a mistake for Groton to control public access television.

Helen Rush, 72 Buddington Road, remarked that the viewing public for television is changing. She is concerned that the number of subscribers will decrease and the only other funding resource will be the taxpayers. Ms. Rush stated that most Americans want less government, stabilized taxes, and opportunities for small businesses.

Chris Regan, 20 Findlay Way, Stonington, representing the Groton Shopping Plaza, believes that the private sector should take on the responsibility of providing public cable access and that the Town should concentrate on running the Town. He thinks there would be a high probability of censorship from the Town if it were awarded the contract and that it should withdraw its application to the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC).

Peter Roper, 210 Pequot Avenue, Mystic, supports SECT TV and stated that he would not want the Town to control all three public channels. He feels that the public should have been allowed to discuss the application more before its submission.

Terry Roper, 210 Pequot Avenue, Mystic, thinks that the Town does a good job with the services that it provides, but that public access television should not be among those services. Ms. Roper would like to know the cost of legal fees the Town has incurred regarding its application, and whether the Town can legally run a public access channel. She hopes that the application to DPUC will be withdrawn to give a small business a chance.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Councilor Johnson is in favor of the Town withdrawing its application to become a public access provider.

The Town Manager noted that the Town would be providing the facility for private citizens to air their programming.

Councilor Flax respects the passion of the members of SECT TV, but does not believe that it is appropriate to withdraw the Town's application to DPUC.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2011-0068 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of March 1, 2011 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2011-0063 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING SPECIAL TRUST FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Susan Decorte McMillan - \$250.00 - Parks and Recreation Revolving

Various Donations - \$853.94 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Groton Utilities - \$237.78 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

Dr. Charles Barnum PTO - \$473.20 - Social Services Discretionary

Rebecca Freeman - \$120.00 - Social Services Discretionary

Various Donations - \$1,086.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2010-0026 Terms and Conditions of Town Clerk Employment

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2010-0210 New London's Request to Use Groton Animal Shelter

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2011-0037 Mystic and Noank Library Study Committee - Update

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2010-0236 Credit Card Usage in Town Departments

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2011-0059 Task Force for Climate Change and Sustainable Community Final Report

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2011-0064 Public Hearing on FYE 2012 Proposed Budget

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)**a. Town Councilors**

Councilors received emails regarding Groton's application to become a public access television provider.

Councilor Johnson attended an Economic Development Commission meeting.

Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Watson, Councilor Flax, and Mayor Streeter attended the RTM meeting.

Councilor Monteiro noted that her email address has changed.

Councilor Kolnaski and Mayor Streeter participated in "Read Across America".

Councilor Kolnaski attended a Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors meeting.

Councilor Flax attended a Noank School Reuse Task Force meeting. He noted that the Saint Patrick's Day parade in Mystic will be on March 20, 2011.

Mayor Streeter received emails regarding OpSail 2012, the Phase II School Facilities Program, and Sister Cities International. He attended an awards ceremony for the Southeastern Connecticut Bowling Association, at which Joe Renda was inducted into its Hall of Fame. The Mayor and the Town Manager met with the chairman of Children First Groton.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The Town Clerk stated that the RTM met on March 9, 2011. She noted that the Town Clerk staff has been very busy scheduling meeting dates for the RTM and its committees for budget discussions.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk stated that both the Thames Street Rehabilitation Program Bond Ordinance and the Phase II School Facilities Program Bond Ordinance were passed by the RTM. The referendum will be on May 2, 2011, with absentee ballots available on April 1, 2011.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager distributed copies of the proposed FYE 2012 budget materials to the Town Council and noted that the public hearing on the proposed budget will be on March 28, 2011, at the Groton Senior Center. Mr. Oefinger requested a suspension of the rules to set a public hearing date for the Interlocal Dispatching Agreement with North Stonington.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS**a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Peruzzotti**

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Johnson

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Flax

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Watson

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Streeter

No report.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2010-0236 Credit Card Usage in Town Departments

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARKS AND RECREATION TO ACCEPT CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton currently accepts credit card payments at the Golf Course and either third party vendor or Discover card payments in the Tax Division and Parks and Recreation, and

WHEREAS, Parks and Recreation would like to institute standard retail credit card acceptance for its programs and events, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton has explored accepting credit cards for Town-wide transactions including tax payments and found that the fees would have a negative impact on departments' operational budgets, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes standard retail credit card acceptance at the Parks and Recreation Department with all related fees and costs borne by Parks and Recreation's Special Revenue Fund, and be it further

RESOLVED, that current methods already in place for credit card acceptance in the Tax Division will remain in place.

A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Johnson does not agree with the entire resolution, but he wants the Parks and Recreation Department to be able to accept credit cards so he will be voting for this resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0059 Task Force for Climate Change and Sustainable Community Final Report**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE FINAL REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY**

WHEREAS, the Town Council appointed the Task Force for Climate Change and Sustainable Community in December 2008 to "develop a plan to comply with the state mandates to reduce carbon emissions from the Town of Groton; promote awareness among the Town's residents of the related facts of climate change and rising global oil use and their implications for Groton; identify the need and opportunities to take action as individuals and as a Town to avoid or reduce adverse impacts from climate change and rising energy costs while seizing economic opportunities created by them," and

WHEREAS, the Task Force has submitted its final report and recommendations to the Town Council, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council thanks the Task Force for its efforts and accepts the final report, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Town Council will continue its deliberations on the recommendations contained in the Final Report of the Task Force for Climate Change and Sustainable Community.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Sheets requested that copies of the final report be made available at the library and on the Town website.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0064 Public Hearing on FYE 2012 Proposed Budget**RESOLUTION SETTING PUBLIC HEARING DATE ON FYE 2012 PROPOSED BUDGET**

RESOLVED, that the Groton Town Council will hold a public hearing on the FYE 2012 Proposed Budget, pursuant to Section 9.3.1 of the Town Charter, on Monday, March 28, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center, Newtown Road (Route 117), Groton, Connecticut.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

Mayor Streeter called a recess to continue the Committee of the Whole meeting at 8:33 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:53 p.m.

2011-0069 Setting the Referendum Date and Form of the Question on Thames Street Rehabilitation Program Bond Ordinance**RESOLUTION SETTING THE REFERENDUM DATE AND FORM OF THE QUESTION ON THAMES STREET REHABILITATION PROGRAM BOND ORDINANCE**

WHEREAS, the Town Council and the Representative Town Meeting have approved an "ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$6,375,505 FOR THE THAMES STREET REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION," now therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that the ordinance be submitted for approval or rejection at a referendum to be held May 2, 2011. Voters approving the ordinance will vote "Yes" and those opposing the ordinance will vote "No", and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the question to be placed on the voting machines shall be worded as

follows:

"SHALL THE ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$6,375,505 AND AUTHORIZING BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT FOR THAMES STREET REHABILITATION PROGRAM BE APPROVED?"

and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is hereby directed to issue any and all warnings, publish all such notices, and file all such statements and reports concerning said referendum as provided by law.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Flax, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0070

Authorization of Thames Street Rehabilitation Program Bond Ordinance Original (Full) Version

AUTHORIZATION OF THAMES STREET REHABILITATION PROGRAM BOND ORDINANCE ORIGINAL (FULL) VERSION

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0071

Setting the Referendum Date and Form of the Question on the Phase II School Facilities Program Bond Ordinance

RESOLUTION SETTING REFERENDUM DATE AND APPROVING THE FORM OF THE QUESTION ON THE PHASE II SCHOOL FACILITIES PROGRAM BOND ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, the Town Council and the Representative Town Meeting have approved an "ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$133,481,150 FOR THE PHASE II SCHOOL FACILITIES PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION", now therefore be it,

RESOLVED, that the ordinance be submitted for approval or rejection at a referendum to be held May 2, 2011. Voters approving the ordinance will vote "Yes" and those opposing the ordinance will vote "No", and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the question to be placed on the voting machines shall be worded as follows:

"SHALL THE ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$133,481,150 AND AUTHORIZING BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT FOR THE PHASE II SCHOOL FACILITIES PROGRAM BE APPROVED?"

and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Clerk is hereby directed to issue any and all warnings, publish all such notices, and file all such statements and reports concerning said referendum as provided by law.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Flax, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0072

Authorization of Phase II School Facilities Program Bond Ordinance Original (Full) Version

AUTHORIZATION OF PHASE II SCHOOL FACILITIES PROGRAM BOND ORDINANCE ORIGINAL (FULL) VERSION

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0073

Authorization for Explanatory Texts for Thames Street Rehabilitation Project and Phase II School Facilities Program Bond Ordinance Referenda

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE PREPARATION OF EXPLANATORY TEXTS FOR THE THAMES STREET REHABILITATION PROGRAM AND PHASE II SCHOOL FACILITIES PROGRAM BOND ORDINANCE REFERENDA

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the Town of Groton that Explanatory Texts for the Thames Street Rehabilitation Project and Phase II School Facilities Program referenda questions to be on the ballot on May 2, 2011 be prepared and distributed to voters, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes such Explanatory Texts to be prepared by the Town Clerk, approved by the Town Attorney, and distributed to the voters of the Town.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Streeter announced his appointments to the Sister Cities International Committee as follows:

Bill Johnson - Town Council

Jean-Claude Ambroise - RTM

Kirsten Hoyt - Board of Education

George Mathanool - Economic Development Commission

Trish Cunningham Walsh - Mystic Chamber of Commerce

Nick Sahin - Citizen-At-Large

Suspension of the Rules

A motion to suspend the rules to consider setting a public hearing for an interlocal dispatching agreement with North Stonington and to discuss a grant to the Children First Groton program was made by Mayor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Monteiro and so voted unanimously.

2011-0076

Public Hearing on Interlocal Dispatching Agreement with North Stonington

PUBLIC HEARING ON INTERLOCAL DISPATCHING AGREEMENT WITH NORTH STONINGTON

WHEREAS, the Town Attorney has prepared a draft interlocal agreement for the Town to continue providing emergency dispatching services to the Town of North Stonington,, and

WHEREAS, Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 7-339c requires the Town Council to hold a public hearing on the proposed agreement, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council schedules a public hearing on the interlocal dispatching agreement with the Town of North Stonington for Tuesday, April 5, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall Annex, 134 Groton Long Point Road.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Adopted.

The Town Manager stated that Groton has been providing dispatch services to North Stonington for a number of years for a fee, but added that the Town should have an interlocal agreement with North Stonington. It is required by statute that before entering into an interlocal agreement, a public hearing must be held.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0077 Children First Groton Grant Application**CHILDREN FIRST GROTON GRANT APPLICATION**

RESOLVED, that Mayor Streeter, and all subsequent mayors, is authorized to sign acknowledgements for future Children First Groton grant applications.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The Town Manager and Mayor Streeter met with Sue Radway, Chairman of Children First Groton, where the Mayor was requested to sign an acknowledgement for a grant application the group had submitted. The reason for the signature is to acknowledge that Groton is aware of the grant application and receptive to the work the group is doing in the community.

The question arose whether the Council should give formal approval for the Mayor to sign these grant acknowledgements. The Town Manager suggested that there be a blanket approval for this type of request.

Mayor Streeter noted that there is no cost to the Town of Groton, and the acknowledgement for these grants comes up about once a year.

The motion carried unanimously

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 9:03 p.m. was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant